

Willis (Billy) Wilcox Memorial



WILLIS WILCOX MEMORIAL

Curtiss Parkway median, south of Eldron Drive

Willis P. (Billy) Wilcox

1920 – 1992

Mayor, Councilman, Civic Leader,

Federal Official, Showman, Friend

The outstanding accomplishments and career of Willis P. (Billy) Wilcox were foreshadowed early in his life as a talented and competitive star athlete at Miami Beach High School. His family background, on both his mother and father's side, has deep roots in show business. Billy grew up on Miami Beach and after high school attended Miami University in Ohio for his freshman year, leaving due to the threat of war. During that time (1941) his family built their house and stables in Miami Springs at 996 Hunting Lodge Drive. When Billy returned home he lived at the house in Miami Springs and attended the University of Miami in Coral Gables until he enlisted in the Navy shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He served four years in the Navy.

It was also in 1941, in Miami, when he met his future wife, Doradean Allen, and they married in 1942. Their first child, Donna, was both in 1943 and their second child, Deanna, was born in 1948. Billy and Doradean bought their first house in Miami Springs on Glendale Drive in 1947, and then in 1957 purchased the family home on Hunting Lodge Drive. After serving in the Navy, he completed his education at the University of Miami and was employed as the Athletic Director for the Coral Gables Youth Center (1948-1950).

Billy was extremely personable and competent, and was chosen by U.S. Representative William Lantaff to be his Administrative Assistant in Washington, DC, from 1950-54. This experience with government and politics led him to a lifetime of public service. While working as a Vice President at the Curtiss National Bank in Miami Springs, he ran for office the first time and was elected to the Miami Springs City Council. He served from 1956-60 and then as mayor from 1960-61. He resigned from this position in 1961, when President John F. Kennedy appointed him director of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) for South Florida. (FHA later became Housing and Urban Development-HUD). During his federal government career he held several positions including Chairman of the Greater Miami Federal Executive Council and HUD Program Coordinator in Chicago and Washington, DC. Billy retired from the Federal Government in 1980 and returned to Miami Springs. His family had expanded to include a son-in-law Robert Sibley (Donna's husband) and three granddaughters, Dori, Amy, and Amanda Sibley, who reside in Towson, Maryland. While in retirement, he was appointed as a member of the Examining Committee for Guardianship in Dade County.

Residents fondly remember Billy as a natural born comedian and gifted actor and he participated in many Hialeah / Miami Springs Lions Club and Miami Springs Junior Woman's Club charitable shows.

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In March 1992, two months before his death, Billy and Doradean celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on a cruise and were joined by their entire family. This memorial in memory of his service to the City of Miami Springs was dedicated in 1993.

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